

# COVID REFLECTION EXERCISE

This guided reflection exercise will help you critically reflect on life and service. Make sure to record your thoughts in your journal.

Your first step is to pray and ask God to guide you and help you to hear Him. Reflection requires slowing down to listen to God, to others and to oneself. It fosters learning, stimulates growth, encourages celebration, calls for course corrections, invites grieving, identifies priorities, and renews focus and energy.

## 1. Look back and remember

Look back and remember: Reflection is often difficult because we simply can't remember what's happened over a longer time-frame. Take a moment to review the year's events by considering the questions below starting back at last New Year's Eve. Privately reflect as the memories come up.

- What were you doing on New Year's Eve? Who were you with? What were you hoping for in the year ahead?
- What challenges were before you?
- What was going on in the lives of the people close to you?
- Write each month (January to October) in your journal or on separate piece of paper. Go month by month and mark down special events: birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, holidays or significant responsibilities. Ask questions for each month such as, what was going on? What was important?

## 2. Intentional reflection

With memories jogged, the next step is intentional, prayerful reflection. Take the time and space you need to privately journal responses to the following questions about this year so far:

- What are you thankful for? Who has blessed you? (List at least 10 items)
  - Who do you need to be intentional to thank?
- Where did you fail? What did you learn?
- What's been disappointing?
- Whom or what do you need to grieve?
- Where have you been stretched? Where have you grown? What have you learned?
- What have you been encouraged by? What should you celebrate?

- Where do you see blessings from waiting? From struggle?
- Whom or what have you invested in?
- How have you seen God at work? What have you learned about God? Where do you see Jesus more in your life and leadership?

### **3. What's essential moving forward?**

As you look to the days ahead, what is essential? From your perspective today, what will matter most? What is critical? Write down 1-2 next steps for each.

- Spiritual life and vitality
- Emotional health
- Physical health
- Key relationships
- Growth needs and opportunities
- Potential areas for increased impact

The following may serve as some prompters to consider:

- What might be on God's heart for you in these areas?
- What 2-4 things can you do that will make the biggest difference?
- Is there an area of your character God may want to grow?
- What spiritual and life rhythms do you need to get in place?
- Are there some key people you want/need to spend more time with?
- Imagine reflecting back a year from now – what words do you want to be able to say about how you lived through the next 12 months?

Go back over your lists. Try to discern what is actually essential and what may be just important or helpful or interesting. Not everything on your list is equal.

### **4. What's holding you back?**

Racing teams go to extreme lengths to identify and then eliminate anything that may be causing unnecessary resistance. In other words, what's holding you back? As Hebrews 12:1 says, "...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles."

- Take inventory. It could be an unhealthy mindset, a missing skillset, a too-small vision of God, fears, a team that isn't aligned, a sin area, a lack of focus, a

mission that is unclear, too many distractions, not having clear priorities or strategy, etc.

- Whatever it is for you, if you can identify what's holding you back, you can formulate a plan to address and eliminate.

## **5. Who should you thank?**

Make a list of people who have helped, blessed, prayed, encouraged, opened doors, sacrificed, mentored, and stood with you this year. Then, take action!

- Write a thank you note.
  - Consider going “old school” with paper, envelope and stamp.
  - Be specific in expressing your gratitude and encouragement.